Completion of irrigation projects

536. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that several irrigation projects have been hampered due to financial crunch and various irrigation projects are pending for approvals;

(b) if so, Government's response there to and the steps taken so far by the Union Government for early completion of all the ongoing irrigation projects;

(c) whether Government have explored the possibilities for increasing the irrigation capacity in the coming years keeping in view the irrigation demand in the country; and

(d) if so, the details of initiatives formulated by Government to meet the demand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) The responsibility of planning, funding and execution of irrigation projects primarily lies with the State Government concerned as irrigation is a State Subject. The priority for irrigation sector funding has declined from about 22.54% in first Plan to about 6.28% in Tenth Plan. Also States take up large number of irrigation projects and the resources are invariably thin spread.

Irrigation and Flood Control projects, which are located on inter-state rivers and tributaries, are being techno-economically appraised by Central Water Commission. The projects are further being considered in Advisory Committee for Irrigation, Flood Control and Multipurpose projects of Ministry of Water Resources for acceptance and according investment approval by Planning Commission.

(b) to (d) The guidelines for the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme have been relaxed in December 2006 and assistance is provided to the states in the form of either 90 per cent grant or 25 per cent grant for completing the irrigation projects.

Under Bharat Nirman, 10 million hectare is proposed to be brought under irrigation during the four-year period 2005-2009. The Working Group on Water Resources for the Eleventh Five-Year Plan has suggested a target of creating 16 million hectare of irrigation potential. The State Governments have to provide adequate funds under the State Plan for achieving these targets.

Work on Rajamunda-Panikoili on NH 215

†537. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for the work on National Highway 215, between Rajamunda and Panikoili, Orissa approved in 2002, not being commenced so far;

(b) the amount allocated so far for construction of this highway;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.